

Listing of Claims

1. (Currently amended) A motor vehicle (1), ~~especially a convertible vehicle~~, with a vehicle body in whose underbody area (2) at least two reinforcing struts (4, 5) are provided, **characterized by** at least one retaining bridge (12) arranged indirectly or directly on the underbody (2) and extending beneath part of an exhaust system (15) for attachment of at least one of the struts (4, 5);

wherein the retaining bridge (12) includes a center area (8) and at least one side attachment flange (13) extending from the center area (8) such that the attachment flange (13) is attached to the underbody (2) and the at least two reinforcing struts (4, 5) are attached to the center area (8).

2. (Original) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) passes beneath an end muffler (16) arranged essentially in the transverse center of the vehicle.

3. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** rear end areas (10, 11) of two struts (4, 5) can be attached to the retaining bridge (12), which extend from there with one component in the direction of travel (F) and are attached at their front ends (6, 7) to the auto body.

4. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) lies at a vertical spacing several centimeters beneath said part of the exhaust system (15).

5. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the struts (4, 5) can be attached to the retaining bridge (12) by screw connections.

6. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) can be attached to the auto body by screw connections.

7. (Currently amended) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, **characterized in that** the underbody (2) has a channel (18) extending upward in the underbody (2) for the exhaust system (15) and surfaces (14) of the auto body lying deeper with respect to it on both sides as attachment surfaces for the retaining bridge (12).

8. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, further comprising at least one vibration-selective sensing unit to record longitudinal stresses on the struts (4, 5) occurring during driving and at least one control element to cause a force that counteracts the longitudinal stress.

9. (Currently amended) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 8, **characterized in that** the at least two struts (4, 5) are connected by a support device that is movable with respect to the retaining bridge (12), in which a common control element is provided for simultaneous influencing of the struts (4, 5) connected to the support device.

10. (Previously presented) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 9, **characterized in that** the support device includes at least one arm designed as a balance beam, which can be pivoted in its middle area about an at least almost vertical axis with respect to the retaining bridge (12) and which is connected to the struts (4, 5) in its end areas.

11. (New) A motor vehicle (1) with a vehicle body in whose underbody area (2), at least two reinforcing struts (4, 5) are provided, the motor vehicle (1) comprising:

at least one retaining bridge (12) arranged indirectly or directly on the underbody area (2) and extending beneath part of an exhaust system (15) for attachment of at least one of the struts (4, 5);

at least one vibration-selective sensing unit to record longitudinal stresses on the struts (4, 5) occurring during driving and at least one control element to cause a force that counteracts the longitudinal stress;

wherein the at least two struts (4, 5) are connected by a support device that is movable with respect to the retaining bridge (12), in which a common control element is provided for simultaneous influencing of the at least two struts (4, 5) connected to the support device;

wherein the support device includes at least one arm designed as a balance beam, which can be pivoted in its middle area about an at least almost vertical axis with respect to the retaining bridge (12) and which is connected to the struts (4, 5) in its end areas.

12. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) passes beneath an end muffler (16) arranged essentially in the transverse center of the vehicle.

13. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** rear end areas (10, 11) of two struts (4, 5) can be attached to the retaining bridge (12), which extend from there with one component in the direction of travel (F) and are attached at their front ends (6, 7) to the auto body.

14. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) lies at a vertical spacing several centimeters beneath said part of the exhaust system (15).

15. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** the struts (4, 5) can be attached to the retaining bridge (12) by screw connections.

16. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** the retaining bridge (12) can be attached to the auto body by screw connections.

17. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 11, **characterized in that** the underbody has a channel (18) extending upward in the underbody (2) for the exhaust system (15) and surfaces (14) of the auto body lying deeper with respect to it on both sides as attachment surfaces for the retaining bridge (12).

18. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to Claim 1, wherein the at least one attachment flange (13) is a pair of attachment flanges (13) that extend from opposing ends of the center area (8) in opposing directions.

19. (New) A motor vehicle (1) according to claim 18, wherein each of the attachment flanges (13) extend from the opposing ends of the center area (8) in a curved fashion such that the retaining bridge (12) is generally trapezoidal.

20. (New) A motor vehicle (1) having a vehicle body including an underbody area (2) and at least two reinforcing struts (4, 5), the motor vehicle (1) comprising:

at least one retaining bridge (12) disposed on the underbody area (2) and extending beneath part of an exhaust system (15) for attachment of at least one of the struts (4, 5);

wherein the at least two struts (4, 5) are connected by a support device that is movable with respect to the retaining bridge (12), in which a common control element is provided for simultaneous influencing of the at least two struts (4, 5) connected to the support device;

wherein the support device includes at least one arm designed as a balance beam, which can be pivoted in its middle area about an at least almost vertical axis with respect to the retaining bridge (12) and which is connected to the struts (4, 5) in its end areas.